

Exchange With Reporters at the Demilitarized Zone July 11, 1993

North Korea

Q. How many more years do you think this line will hold?

The President. I don't know. I hope it won't be long. But in the meanwhile, I'm glad these people are here. All these young men are doing something very important. And when you see, as I said, when you see the way North Korea's been behaving, their presence here is even more important. The American people should be very proud of them. They are making a major contribution to the defense of freedom and also to the spread of freedom. And in the end our side of that bridge will prevail.

Q. Do you think they know you're here?

The President. I imagine they do. They were certainly looking. And someday they'll be able to—

Q. Menacingly?

The President. Well, I hope someday they'll just be able to walk on over here in peace.

Q. Knowing what you know now, do you think they're more likely or less likely, the North Koreans, to comply with the treaty?

The President. Well, I don't know. They've been rather calm in response to my trip here. And that is somewhat encouraging. But it doesn't make any sense. When you examine the nature of the American security commitment to Korea, to Japan, to this region, it is pointless for them to try to develop nuclear weapons because if they ever use them it would be the end of their country. All they have to do is read our security agreements.

So I hope that this trip will serve to get things back on track. And I hope they will com-

ply. The President of South Korea, President Kim, has laid out a long-term gradual way of reunification that is clearly in the interest of the people on both sides of this great divide. But we can't even resume that until they make it clear that they're going to stay in the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, they're going to allow the inspectors back in, they're not going to try to become a nuclear power. That's the major issue for this day. And until that happens, we just need to redouble our resolve and make it clear where we are.

Q. Well, weren't they moving toward rapprochement, and all of a sudden something happened, they were really—

The President. They seemed to be. And, as I said, President Kim reached out to them. And it's clear that the people of South Korea would like reunification to be possible, if you can preserve democracy and freedom.

So we'll just have to see. The wisdom of what our country has done for 40 years is basically demonstrated by this abrupt change in North Korean policy. We know what works. If we just stay strong and we stay resolute and we stay firm, we know that will work. And eventually, we have to hope that they will take the sensible course and that we can then resume the thaw that was in place before this last unfortunate development.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:55 p.m. at the Bridge of No Return.

Remarks to the Troops at Camp Casey, South Korea July 11, 1993

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you, General Abrams. Thank you, Sergeant Corley, for the tomahawk.

Audience members. Oooh.

The President. He looks to me like he could use it. [Laughter]

I want to say how glad I am to be here today. I want to introduce a couple of the peo-

ple who came with me: the Secretary of State Warren Christopher; your Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin; I think you know General Luck. And I thank you already for the welcome to me and my wife, the First Lady.

I see some of the young women soldiers